(b) and (c) The decision to remove "Onion" from the list of essential commodities was taken as a part of the Policy evolved by the Committee comprising of some Union Ministers and Chief Ministers constituted during the Conference of Chief Ministers on "WTO and Agriculture" held on 21st May 2001. The said Committee decided to dismantle all unnecessary and redundant controls on movement and distribution, particularly to agricultural commodities, under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955. The proposal of the Government of Andhra Pradesh was examined and a suitable reply was sent accordingly.

(d) and (e) At present, the retail prices of onion in the country, including at Hyderabad, are relatively low and also there is no shortage of onion. Therefore, there is no proposal at present under consideration of the Government for import of onion.

Quota for rice/wheat to BPL/IRDP families

3692. SHRIMATI VIPLOVE THAKUR: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the quota for rice/wheat to BPL/IRDP families has been reduced; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Deferment of taxes on sugar Industry

3693. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any plan to waive or defer for the time being, the taxes imposed by the Central and State Governments on the sugar industry which was reeling under heavy financial burden so that sugar could be provided to consumers at an affordable price;

(b) if so, the details worked out, so far; and